

Washington, DC – Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Transportation released a report to study freight transportation issues facing rural America. The study focused on freight rail, particularly as it relates to the movement of agricultural inputs and commodities, renewable fuels, and coal. The study was mandated by a Walz amendment to the 2008 Farm Bill.

“The transportation of agricultural products is critical to our rural economy,” said Walz. “This study provides Congress the most up-to-date data and information about transportation challenges we face in rural America. I am pleased that this study will allow us to make informed decisions about policies that lead to more efficient transportation of commodities and goods in the future, particularly as Congress prepares to take up the Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill.”

The *Study of Rural Transportation Issues*, conducted jointly by USDA and the Department of Transportation, examined the effect of deregulation on the rail industry, the reasonableness of rates and the reliability of service, how better policies can improve the flow of freight through all modes of transportation and whether the federal grievance process for shippers is too cumbersome to be effective.

This study reaffirmed that freight rail is a critical mode of transportation for rural America. It also confirmed that decreased competition in the rail industry has led to increased rates for shippers and ultimately, consumers who are buying groceries or paying their electricity bills.

To read the study, please [click here](#) .

Last week, The Hill published an op-ed by Rep. Walz that called for open and free competition in the rail industry, while acknowledging the important role the rail industry plays in shipping goods throughout the United States. To read that op-ed, please [click here](#) .

-30-